THE

SECESSION

VINDICATED.

Recd Dec 18. 1843

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BURTON-HALL, *Jan.* 10, 1799.

THE

SECESSION

FROM

PARLIAMENT

VINDICATED.

By the Rev. CHRISTOPHER WYVILL,
LATE CHAIRMAN OF THE ASSOCIATION OF THE COUNTY OF YORK.

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THE

SECESSION

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PARLIAMENT

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IN the laſt Seſſion of Parliament it was obvious, and in leſs diſtreſſing circumſtances it would have been amuſing to obſerve the eagerneſs of the Miniſters' partizans, in their attempts to blaſt the characters of their Seceded Opponents. They neither felt the dignity of their conduct, nor comprehended its utility. With ſtrange inconſiſtence they lamented the retirement of Senators, whoſe counſels they conſtantly rejected; and cenſured them for violence of conduct, becauſe they ceaſed to diſpute, where they had found it impoſſibe to per-

ſuade. Their petulance reminded us of the youthful zeal of Aſcanius in the Chace;

" Optat——fulvum deſcendere MONTE LEONEM."

With his boaſtful preſumption they wiſhed to renew the combat of Parliamentary Debate, and challenged to perſonal conflict thoſe abſent Chieftains, whoſe ſuperiority of proweſs they at once dreaded and provoked.

This idle petulance, and theſe ill-founded cavils may be ſafely conſigned, with a ſmile of contempt, to their merited oblivion. But graver objections have been urged by more plauſible Advocates of the Miniſter, and haſtily adopted on inſufficient grounds, as we conceive, by men adverſe to his meaſures, and anxious for the preſervation of popular rights. In their eſtimation, Seceſſion is always a dereliction of Public Duty; it is alike inconſiſtent with the principles of the Conſtitution, and injurious to the welfare of the Community. Our readers probably will not deem it unſeaſonable for a ſhort time to fix their attention on each of theſe topics: and we apprehend it will be neither very difficult, nor wholly uſeleſs to ſhow the futility of theſe cenſures; and to prove Seceſſion from Parliament, at preſent, to be juſtifiable, and even meritorious.

But here it ſhall be readily admitted, that, in ordinary caſes, attendance is the indiſpen-

ſible Duty of Men who have been called, by popular Election, or the appointment of the Crown, to a ſeat in Parliament. By authority derived from the Conſtitution, the Members have been placed in a ſtation of great importance to the Public; and the rule of virtue binds them with a comprehenſive generality, not to abandon their poſt. But upon examination, this, as almoſt every other rule of morality, will be found to admit ſome reaſonable exceptions. Certain it is, at leaſt, that the Law of Parliament attempts not to enforce perpetual attendance. The Members, when duly ſummoned, are bound to obey the call of their Speaker; and they are bound by the orders of their reſpective Houſes to nothing more. Every Member is free either to attend or to be abſent, as his diſcretion directs him, except in this ſingle caſe, that there is a Call of the Houſe. And hitherto the exerciſe of this diſcretionary power has been attended with no viſible detriment to the Community. It is hardly poſſible that it ever ſhould. In the Houſe in which alone that power is likely to be exerted with efficacy, the controul of the Conſtituent Body is ſufficient to prevent any material abuſe. But the poſſible good effects of that diſcretionary power are obvious, and of the utmoſt importance. Our Conſtitution is a complicated machine, by which the end propoſed can only be obtained, when the juſt balance is preſerved

in the ſcale of Legiſlative Authority. But when this ſyſtem of powers and weights, mutually combined and mutually oppoſed to each other, happens to be deranged, the means to rectify the machine, and reſtore the proper movement of its diſordered parts, have not been unprovided. When dangerous diſputes have ariſen between the Executive Power and the Parliament, the PEOPLE are the UMPIRE to whoſe judgment alone they can be referred, and by whoſe deciſion they can be happily adjuſted. On ſuch emergencies, the Crown may diſſolve the Parliament, in order that the ſenſe of the People upon the diſputed points may be authentically declared by a new choice of Repreſentatives. This has been often done; and it is fit that this Right of Appeal againſt the majority of Parliament ſhould be poſſeſſed by the Crown. In this manner the miſchiefs of Legiſlative Diſcord may be prevented with eaſe; the pins and bolts which diſturbed the motion of the political machine may be quietly removed, and the neceſſary harmony and co-operation of its various parts may be ſafely reſtored. But the Liberty and Happineſs of the Community may be endangered or deſtroyed by majorities in Parliament corruptly leagued with the Crown, as without this power of Appeal they would have been by majorities factiouſly combined againſt it. In fact, the evils which might reſult from the corrupt league

alluded to, are more to be dreaded than the miſchiefs which a factious Oppoſition could produce. They are evils far worſe, and far likelier to happen in any ſtate of the Conſtitution. Were the Repreſentation of the People duly regulated, and the duration of Parliaments ſhortened to their ancient period of a year, a factious Oppoſition thwarting at once the will of the Crown, and the wiſh of the People, would be almoſt an unheard-of prodigy. At the ſtated period, the Parliament in which ſuch a Faction ſhould ſtart up, would be terminated, and with it would be cloſed the exiſtence of ſo ſtrange a Phænomenon. The confuſion would be ſhort, the difficulty would be ſoon got over, and National Happineſs would be reſtored by a new Parliament. In the caſe ſuppoſed however, it would be wiſe to continue the Royal Appeal, as a Preventive of theſe poſſible evils. But then it would be ſtill more neceſſary that the more fatal evils of the league alluded to, ſhould be guarded againſt, by allowing the Minority their Power of Appeal by SECESSION. For even in the moſt improved ſtate of the Conſtitution, it would be impoſſible wholly and at all times to exclude Corruption and honeſt Infatuation. Circumſtances are conceivable, in which Parliament might prove unfaithful to its truſt; and a majority of its Members, panic-ſtruck by popular turbulence, or baſely ſold to the Miniſter, might be willing to ſurrender every valuable Right of the Nation. In ſuch a con-

juncture, it is evident, that PUBLIC RUIN would be almoſt unavoidable. No factious majority oppoſed to the Crown, could reduce the Country to ſo perilous a ſtate. It was foreſeen by the ſagacious Cecil, that England might again be placed in this ſituation of extreme danger, as it had been once before, in the ſtormy reign of Henry the Eighth. Hence the ſolicitude of that honeſt Stateſman, to warn his Countrymen, "THAT THEY COULD ONLY BE RUINED BY THEIR PARLIAMENT." Henry was ſtern and reſolute: Enriched by the ſpoils of the Church, and armed by his new Penal Statutes, with a formidable power, he finally obtained a more abſolute command than any of our Monarchs. After many baſe compliances, his Parliament gave to the Royal Proclamations the force of Law. This ſingle vote inveſted that bloody and capricious Tyrant with the unbounded power of Deſpotiſm. In a ſubſequent reign, indeed, this Law was repealed; if ſo, this Statute muſt be termed, and not rather deemed, an unauthorized Act of Treachery, and a Nullity deſtitute of legal authority. By this repeal, however, the greateſt political evil was for that time happily excluded. But Treachery which was committed then, may be again committed. We have ceaſed indeed to be alarmed by Prerogative. But if the means of Undue Influence are now increaſed, if the manners of the Public are more luxurious and enervate, and its character feebler and proner to corrup-

tion in this reign than they were in the rude and ſimple age of Henry the Eighth, we have but to conclude, that a breach of Truſt, as fatal as that, is now as likely to be committed; that Venality may ſell, or Infatuation yield, what fear then ſurrendered; and the loſs never may be repaired by the ſubſequent remorſe or reſipiſcence of Parliament. And we ſhall be ſtill more powerfully compelled to adopt this concluſion, if we accord with thoſe who have long contended, that the Repreſentation of the People is in a ſtate ſo depraved, that without a Radical Reform in this reſpect, neither the Liberties of the People can be ſafe, nor the permanence of a virtuous Adminiſtration can be ſecured.

In any ſtate of the Conſtitution, therefore, whether pure or depraved, Seceſſion muſt be allowable. It is the appeal of a minority in Parliament, againſt the obſtinacy, the infatuation, or the treachery of a majority. And in this caſe, as in that of the Royal Appeal by Diſſolution, the PEOPLE are the UMPIRE to whom the Appeal is made. It is a meaſure conſonant with the principles of the Conſtitution; and it may be abſolutely neceſſary, as the only poſſible Preventive of Ruin.

But that the exerciſe of this diſcretionary power of Seceſſion may be juſtifiable, there

muſt be an emergency of great Public Danger; there muſt be a moral certainty, from the continued obſtinacy of Parliament in adhering to meaſures of a pernicious tendency, that farther Debate will be altogether uſeleſs; that a timely change of counſels is not to be hoped from the unaſſiſted wiſdom of Parliament; and conſequently, that a National Deliverance can only be effected by a juſt and conſtitutional interference of the People. Under theſe circumſtances there is an actual neceſſity for their interpoſition; which will, and which alone can juſtify an Appeal to the People by Seceſſion. When the neceſſary means of ſafety have not been ſpontaneouſly, and in time applied by Parliament, what the reaſon and eloquence of the minority have in vain recommended, may be obtained by the deciſive authority of the Public Opinion. On a timely declaration of that opinion may hang the laſt hope of ſalvation; and Seceſſion, with a view to procure it, may thus become a neceſſary Act of Duty.

It is true, that the truſt and confidence of the Nation have uſually been repoſed in Parliament; and it is moſt deſirable that this Aſſembly ſhould always deſerve that confidence and truſt. Parliament is, or it ought to be, the bulwark of our ſafety: it is the citadel of the Conſtitution, erected by common conſent

for the defence of our Rights, againſt the attacks of foreign or internal Foes. They who are placed in that fortreſs, have, indeed, a ſacred truſt committed to their charge; it behoves them faithfully to fulfil it, and to maintain their poſt to the laſt extremity. But ſhould a majority of the garriſon prove groſsly negligent and falſe to their truſt; ſhould it appear that cowardice or corruption had frightened or ſeduced them from their duty, and they had even formed a reſolution to betray the citadel to the enemy, what would remain to be done by the few brave Men who continued true to their truſt, and to the intereſt of the Community? What, but to retreat from that poſt where their attendance was uſeleſs, where it would even tend to lull thoſe whoſe Soldiers they were, into a pernicious ſecurity; and warning their Fellow-Citizens, in all haſte, to line the remaining works of the Conſtitution, to aſſiſt them in their juſt attempt to reſcue their fortreſs out of the hands of a treacherous garriſon. The Rules of the Conſtitution, and the Laws of Military Diſcipline would alike acquit the Senators and the Warriors, who ſhould leave their poſt to ſave their Country. It would be a meritorious retreat from an untenable poſition, to that ſtation in which they ſtill might hope to make a glorious and ſucceſsful defence.

It ſeems clear, therefore, that in ſuch extraordinary caſes, the Seceſſion of Members from Parliament is perfectly defenſible on the principles of the Conſtitution. It is their laſt regular Appeal to the Nation, againſt the obſtinate folly and raſhneſs, or the infidelity of the major part of their Truſtees. And if the impending danger were evident to the Public; if the neceſſity for a retreat were clear and urgent, undoubtedly the Seceding Members would be received with open arms by their Fellow-Citizens.

Such, in all probability, would be their immediate reception. But if the reverſe ſhould happen,—if their motives ſhould be miſunderſtood, and, for a time, unpopularity ſhould load their miſtaken characters, it is not poſſible in the caſe ſuppoſed that the deluſion could continue. Aſſuredly Juſtice would atlaſt be done by their Country, and the band of faithful Patriots would not deſpair of the Commonwealth. They would conſider, that their Seceſſion had become neceſſary at a time peculiarly favourable, perhaps, to the arts of Miniſterial deception. The Nation might be engaged in a War with a formidable adverſary; and the prejudices of ancient rivalry, mixed with terror and diſguſt at the dreadful exceſſes of a Revolution, might have been ſkilfully

wrought up to a pitch of furious animoſity. Though the ſpirit of Loyalty in the great Body of the People had never been higher, or more unqueſtionable, yet the ſeditious tendency of ſome malignant Publications, the indiſcretion of ſome obſcure Societies, and the violence of ſome popular Meetings, might have been magnified, with too fatal ſucceſs, to inſpire a general panic. By ſuch arts, the Nation might have been deluded into a tranſient dereliction of the principles of Liberty, and for a time might ſeem almoſt willing to preſerve their Property and the Peace of the Country from the imagined plunder and commotion, by the ſacrifice of All that Engliſhmen have been wont moſt to prize, the dignity of their Independence, and the fearleſs ſecurity of their Freedom. But the Patriot Stateſmen, though not purſued in their retreat by the general acclamation of their Countrymen, would be ſupported by the applauſe of the wiſe and good, and the concurring zeal of every conſiſtent Friend of Freedom. Paſt experience would aſſure them, that the accumulating burthens of War, and the near approach of a Military Deſpotiſm, would at length diſſolve theſe deluſions, like miſts before the eyes of the multitude, and bring them back from infatuation and political ſtupefaction to common ſenſe and their original feelings; that the gulph into which they were juſt ready to be precipitated, would be diſcerned before it was too

late; that the RUIN, which, at a diſtance, had been in vain pointed out to them, on their near approach to it, would be ſeen impending over their heads, and threatening inſtantly to overwhelm them. Undoubtedly, when that moment has arrived, the Nation will ſtart back with horror equal to its aſtoniſhment; and the Patriots, whoſe warning voice had long been diſregarded, will ultimately be hailed, with a rapture of gratitude, as the DELIVERERS of their COUNTRY.

Such will be the remote, or more immediate approbation, which will aſſuredly attend the meaſure of Seceſſion, on any emergency of great and urgent neceſſity. And if it be certain, when thus circumſtanced, finally to receive the applauſe and ſupport of the Nation, it is a matter comparatively unimportant to inquire, whether the conduct of the Seceded Members has met the approbation of their reſpective Conſtituents. It is probable, that their applauding voice would anticipate or confirm that of the Public. But, if from ſome ſtrange miſconception, or ſome peculiar ignobility of mind, the Conſtituents of any one of theſe generous Members could diſapprove and cenſure his Appeal againſt a corrupt and over-bearing majority, doubtleſs, when this diſcordance of ſentiment appeared, he would reſign his truſt. Having thus given them the opportunity of a

more congenial choice, he would have fulfilled, in every point, the arduous duty of a Repreſentative. His Conſtituents might deſert and reject, but they could not diſhonour him. Under their injuſtice he might well conſole himſelf with the conſcious ſatisfaction of Virtue, and the general gratitude of his Countrymen: and at the cloſe of his Parliamentary Life, adopting the words faintly uttered by the virtuous Savile at the point of death, he might juſtly exclaim, "*I have finiſhed, and I have finiſhed well.*"

It may, we truſt, be now aſſumed without preſumption, that caſes of neceſſity may poſſibly exiſt, in which Seceſſion would be juſtifiable, and even highly meritorious. But little will have been done for the exculpation of our Retired Stateſmen, by proving the truth of this general propoſition, unleſs it be alſo ſhown, from the particular circumſtances in which they ſtood when their Seceſſion took effect, that their ſpecific caſe is a caſe of neceſſity. On the principles of the Conſtitution, and on the practice which has been allowed under it, they had a diſcretionary power to Secede. This, we conceive, will not be denied: whether that diſcretion has been wiſely exerciſed, is the more thorny queſtion which remains for our conſideration.

But here an ermined Sophiſter, viewing us with eye aſkance, and a frowning brow, ſeems to interrupt us. What indecency, he cries, to compare, though by the moſt diſtant alluſion, the beſt of Princes and of Huſbands, to the Tyrant Henry, the murderer of his wives! What injuſtice to argue from one ſolitary fact in the reign of that Monarch, under whom the Parliament was over-awed by Prerogative, and the People were uninſtructed, poor, and miſerable, to aught which can be expected in theſe times, in which the Parliament is free and independent, and the People are enlightened, rich, and happy! Let Seceſſion, in ſome imaginary caſe, be allowed to be innocent; but let ſpeculators beware how they apply this doctrine to the preſent ſtate of the Country: Let them reſpect the ſtricter regulations by which our Penal Statutes have been fortified; and learn to curb the impetuoſity of an untamed imagination, or check the indiſcretion of political zeal.

It is not our intention to incur the blame of contemning the Laws of our Country. It is not our wiſh either to flatter or defame the mild Prince upon the Throne. We truſt that we honour him as we ought; nor more, nor leſs than duty requires. If the example of private virtue in the Sovereign were alone ſufficient to ſecure to a great Nation the poſſeſ-

ſion of thoſe Rights on which its ſafety and happineſs depend, we add, with pleaſure, that Britain ought now to be contented. To the Conſtitution, on its genuine principles, we are faithfully attached; and it is our ſincere Prayer to Providence, that, on thoſe principles, the Britiſh Empire may ever be governed by the Family on the Throne. Were the new Penal Statutes, with their improvements, copied from the Code of Scotland, more ſevere and captious than they are, though we could not revere, we would obey them; and, by confining ourſelves within the narrower limits then preſcribed, endeavour to ſhun the traps of Informers, and the ſnares of legal Chicaners. We would willingly walk round our native fields in ſafety, and do our duty to the Public in theſe perilous times, without expoſing ourſelves to unneceſſary ſufferings, the victims of a raſh and enthuſiaſtic zeal. The public good which it is poſſible for private men to do, may thus, and thus only be effected; whether their efforts tend to check the headlong career of Miniſters, or to arouze the People from their abject ſtupefaction to a juſt and rational concern for their endangered freedom. But when a Military Deſpotiſm threatens the Nation with an utter extinction of its Rights, caution muſt not degenerate into timidity, nor moderation cool to apathy and torpid inaction. The hand which trembles as it writes, will

never uphold the ſinking Liberties of the Nation. We mean not to excite hatred or contempt either of our aged Monarch, or of the Conſtitution, impaired as it is by time, and verging to decay. If ſuch a Monſter as Jefferies now ſat upon the Bench, even his cruel acuteneſs would not diſmay us, while Juries remained the Protectors of Innocence. Relying on their impartiality, we proceed with the firmneſs of conſcious integrity to the more invidious part of our taſk, viz. to conſider, whether exiſting circumſtances actually form a caſe of neceſſity in which it has been proved that Seceſſion from Parliament is juſtifiable.

At a Public Meeting of a great County, a Patriot Member * was embarraſſed by a queſtion of ſimilar difficulty, but not then of equal danger. One of his Conſtituents bluntly aſked him, whether Parliament was not corrupted by the Miniſter. The cautious, but honeſt reply of the Repreſentative was worthy of his character. "If Weſtminſter-Hall proof of Parliamentary corruption be wanted, it is not to be had; but no one but a mere Parſon Adams doubts the fact." The opinion thus intimated was confirmed, in a ſhort time, by the vote of Parliament itſelf, that the influence of the Crown had increaſed and ought to be diminiſhed. If the incomparable Patriot alluded to were now

* Sir George Savile, in the year 1779.

living, and the queſtion were repeated to him, could he give a different anſwer? We ſhall not decide this point. It is true, that a partial reduction of the influence then complained of, was effected by a ſucceeding Adminiſtration; and though the trunk was left untouched, a few of the ſmaller branches were lopt from the tree of Corruption. But has not the tree recovered its loſſes? Has not its trunk ſwollen to a ſtill more gigantic ſize? Has not a new growth of branches ſhot forth and ſpread their baneful ſhade farther than ever? Theſe are queſtions which may be aſked, and we anſwer them in the manner of our honoured Patriot, Who can doubt it? Should the Queriſt, dropping his figurative language, preſs the inquiry in plainer terms, whether the means of political Corruption have not been immenſely augmented under the preſent Adminiſtration? Whether they have not been employed more extenſively, and with a more dangerous and debaſing effect, during the period of the preſent War, than they were in the courſe of our Civil War with America? We would bid the Queriſt go to the Miniſter, and aſk him: let Mr. Pitt deny the fact, or defend it, if he can.

Shall we be charged with a diſpoſition to exaggerate? Will it be objected, that from the acknowledgment of American Independence the

ſyſtem of influence received a material curtailment? Let it be obſerved, in reply, that the influence derived from our American Colonies was loſt when Congreſs, outraged by the haughty refuſal of Parliament to liſten to their petition, reſolved to revolt. After that honeſt declaration by Parliament, and ſubſequently to the peace with America, our increaſed eſtabliſhments at Home, in Canada, Nova Scotia, &c. and above all, the command of the Eaſt Indian patronage, acquired by the preſent Miniſter, have compenſated for petty reforms, and added to the fund of influence an almoſt incalculable ſurplus.

But the Miniſter ſhall not be loaded by us with the imputation of guilt not his own. The fund of Corruption has not been enlarged to its preſent enormous ſize by craft and contrivance in this reign only. It is the reſult of time and accident, combined with Miniſterial fraud, and that paſſion for power which is the inſtinctive propenſity of every Government. Through a long ſeries of years, there has been a concurrence of many official men in meaſures tending to produce this effect; and the ultimate conſequence of theſe meaſures, ſometimes forced upon Miniſters by the folly of the Nation, ſometimes adopted by them as the mere expedients of the moment, has often been neither foreſeen nor intended. For more than a cen-

tury this Country has been engaged with zeal in the purſuit of power, by the acquiſition of territory and commercial ſuperiority. For this purpoſe, ſettlements have been eſtabliſhed, or acquired by conqueſt, in every quarter of the globe: ſome of them military poſts for our army; ſome of them convenient ſtations for our fleets; the reſt Plantations in iſlands, rich in the various productions moſt ſaleable in the markets of Europe; or Continental Colonies, by our foſtering care, gradually reared up to populous Provinces; while the mercantile Directors of a few factories on the coaſt of India, by a ſudden Revolution, have been transformed into the Sultans of extenſive kingdoms, ſubordinate only to the Monarch of Britain. Hence the wars with which we have been ſo frequently harraſſed, with ſhort intermiſſions of peace! Hence the mighty growth of our army, our navy, and our multitudinous eſtabliſhments at home, and in our provinces abroad! Hence the enormous and ſtill-increaſing burthen of our taxes, and the overwhelming accumulation of the patronage of the Crown! Dazzled by the ſplendour of our naval exploits, flattered by conqueſt and political aggrandizement, the Nation never ſeemed to reflect, that too much proſperity might be our ruin; that the ſucceſsful purſuit of this ſyſtem of conqueſt might

finally overturn the balance of the Conſtitution.

It is the acknowledged office of Parliament to controul the Executive Government, and in different ages it has performed that duty with varied ſucceſs. In the earlieſt period of the Conſtitution, the Crown poſſeſſing with its legal powers an immenſe landed eſtate, was often enabled, by the weight of its property, to aſſume an arbitrary authority, under the pretence of an undefined Prerogative. Our Repreſentatives were then, indeed, well connected with the body of the Nation; Bribery was a practice unknown to the Electors; and the corruption of Parliament itſelf was unheard-of and unſuſpected. But over-awed by the Crown and its allies, the great Feudal Barons, the Commons feebly protected the Rights of their Conſtituents. The balance of the Conſtitution was unequally hung, the Crown was too powerful, and the Nation was frequently oppreſſed.

In the middle age of the Conſtitution, the power which the Crown derived from its vaſt demeſnes was much diminiſhed; partly by improvident waſte; partly by donations for the purpoſe of obtaining influence and command. During that period, the People, by their induſtry, acquired much of that landed opulence

which the Crown had ſquandered, and their Repreſentatives, ſtill faithful to their truſt, were now better able to ſupport the freedom of the Community. In the times alluded to, a long ſyſtematic ſtruggle took place, ſometimes in the Senate, ſometimes unhappily in the Field, with undeciſive ſucceſs. A ſucceſſion of venerable Patriots then aroſe; and from the days of Peter Wentworth and Elliot, of Pym, Hampden, Holles and Selden, to thoſe of Sidney and Ruſſel, of Cavendiſh and Somers, their object was the ſame, viz. to eſtabliſh on ſolid foundations the conſtitutional controul of Parliament, and the REIGN OF LAW by the adminiſtration of a LIMITED KING.

The laſt, and in ſome reſpects the happieſt age of the Conſtitution, commenced at the Revolution, when that glorious object ſeemed to be attained, and the balance of the Conſtitution to be happily adjuſted. But the price paid for the benefits purchaſed by that event was great indeed: a long war with France in the reign of William, another in that of Anne, and, by the acceſſion of the Family of Brunſwick, a perpetual entanglement in the affairs of the Continent, and an augmented riſque of being involved in the bloody and expenſive Wars of the Continental Powers. At the cloſe of the ſecond of theſe Wars, the Nation had acquired much foreign territory, and with thoſe long and ſucceſsful hoſtilities had

contracted a paſſion for conqueſt, and the unlimited command of commercial advantage. From the period of the Revolution-Wars, we alſo may date the commencement of the funding ſyſtem, with its concomitant train of evils. For, undoubtedly, from the greater facility of borrowing has, in part, ariſen the greater frequency of Wars; and thence have followed an increaſing military force by ſea and land, and a continual augmentation of debts, taxes, and patronage of every ſpecies. The conſequences of this augmentation were long unheeded, and its progreſs ſtill gratified the vanity, without alarming the prudence of the Nation. At length, in the ſpace of one century, it has grown into a ſyſtem of enormous extent and unſpeakable danger. To the wiſeſt Stateſman, the pureſt Patriot, and the moſt ſincere Advocate of our mixed Monarchy in the laſt generation, the growth of undue influence then was very alarming. To evince this aſſertion, the names of Chatham, Savile, and Blackſtone, need only to be mentioned. Since their days, the danger has ſtill been increaſing, the ſyſtem of influence has ſtill been extending itſelf by new Wars, and a freſh acquiſition of diſtant territory. Each new conqueſt has of courſe flattered the victor Nation with another map of its demeſnes, and an additional liſt of military and civil officers. But influence derived from the gift of offices whence income is obtained, is ſimilar, and may become

perfectly equivalent to the influence which our ancient Monarchs, our Edwards and our Henrys, derived from the donation of their lands.

And on a juſt eſtimate, it would probably be found even now, that the preſent Monarch poſſeſſes as great and extenſive command, by the means of this ſpecies of influence, as the proudeſt of his Predeceſſors drew from his immenſe domain. Be this as it may, it is ſurely time to conſider how this dangerous and increaſing power may be ſtopt in its progreſs, and reduced within that limit of ſafety which it has ſo far ſurpaſſed. Among other means for effecting this neceſſary purpoſe, Peace is at once the moſt deſirable and the moſt efficacious. It is time to finiſh this calamitous War, not ſolely for the intereſts of humanity and religion, ſo groſsly outraged by the pretence that for their defence it was undertaken, but alſo for the ſake of our domeſtic happineſs, and the ſafety of the Conſtitution, now ſo evidently endangered by its continuance. The War, commenced on theſe hypocritical pretences, no longer can be denied to be a ſtruggle for political power, and the farther extenſion of our Empire. To men of the plaineſt underſtanding, the conſequence which may be juſtly apprehended is but too manifeſt; the balance of the Conſtitution may be irrecoverably deſtroyed by the ſucceſs of our inconſiderate and unprincipled ambition. Parliament, con-

ſtantly expoſed to the exorbitant influence which may thus continue to be amaſſed, may ſink, we know not how ſoon, into a mere office to regiſter the edicts of the Miniſter, and our Repreſentatives may then be ſeen crouching at the foot of the Throne, and like the Senators of Imperial Rome idolizing, in proſtrate ſervility, THE EMPEROR OF BRITAIN.

The fate of the ambitious Romans ought to have been a warning to this too-aſpiring Nation. During a long ſeries of Wars, the legions of the Republic had ſubdued and triumphed over every foe, and Rome became the miſtreſs of the world. But that moment when univerſal dominion was attained, was fatal to the liberty of the Romans. Their Conſuls and Proconſuls had conquered, not for their country, but for themſelves; and Rome triumphant and enſlaved by the Cæſars, too late lamented that the paths of conqueſt and glory lead only to the grave of liberty and the public happineſs.

Such may be our fate in the laſt and declining age of the Conſtitution; even ſo may Britain, undone by her victories, mourn in hopeleſs regret the complete extinction of her rights. Enervated by her luxury, debaſed by a long courſe of profligy and corruption, ſhe may be compelled to ſubmit to that iron yoke of Deſpotiſm, for which her vices ſeem to have prepared her, though ſhe

knows not how to endure it.—May a timely change of ſyſtem prevent this worſt of miſeries! May nations, as well as individuals, be taught by experience to eſtimate their intereſt aright: may they become juſt and temporate in their deſires: may pomp and ſplendour ceaſe to faſcinate their minds, and bloated grandeur, embarraſſed with debts and ſurrounded with cares and vexations, with many dangers known and unknown, no longer be preferred to the ſolid felicity of a ſafe, affluent, and honourable Independence.

But having admitted in extenuation of his fault, that many of his predeceſſors ſhare with the preſent Miniſter the blame of having contributed to rear the fabric of influence to its preſent ſtupendous height; we ſhall not heſitate to aſſert, that in ſome important reſpects he is incomparably more criminal than they. Undoubtedly that Stateſman, whoſe wiſdom it is natural for him moſt to revere, muſt have warned him with earneſtneſs to ſhun the evils of a ſtill farther accumulation of influence in the Crown. To his penetrating eye the danger was plainly viſible, long before the cloſe of life. His own victorious Adminiſtration had increaſed it in a very conſiderable degree; and he lived to feel the pernicious effects of that increaſe. But with a magnanimous zeal for liberty, and an almoſt

prophetic preſcience of events, he diſtinctly pointed out to his Countrymen the approaching danger, and preſcribed in timely Reform the means to avert it. By this conduct, the moſt ſucceſsful Miniſter of Great-Britain was dignified by the more valuable and laſting praiſe of Philoſophic Patriotiſm. Thus enlightened by the precepts of an illuſtrious Father, the Son ſucceeded to a ſeat in the Cabinet, ſoon after the expulſion of North; when even the ſordid Parliament of that Miniſter had recently declared, that the immenſe accumulation of patronage muſt be diminiſhed. From the younger Pitt no farther augmentation of the fund of Corruption was dreaded by the Nation. And ſhortly after that riſe, on his exaltation to Miniſterial ſupremacy, he was received by the friends of freedom with acclamations of joy. They then fondly preſaged, that an effectual barrier to Liberty againſt the inroads of Deſpotiſm would be the work of his Adminiſtration. And in the early part of it, when the bloom of youth and virtue was freſh upon him, he gave his Countrymen the promiſe of noble deeds, which ſeemed to juſtify their partial attachment. But, blaſted by the poiſonous effects of power, the bloom quickly withered and decayed; and every generous purpoſe, impreſſed by parental authority, and avowed by the zeal of his own approving heart, gave way to the luſt of ſelfiſh ambition. Inſtead

of the Protector of their Rights, the People have found him their determined Enemy. Inſtead of renovating what was infirm in the Conſtitution, he has impaired what he found ſound and vigorous. Under his direction, the fund of influence has received a rapid extenſion; the debt and taxes of the Public, its eſtabliſhments, civil and military, have been increaſed in a prodigious degree, and theſe dreaded inſtruments of Deſpotiſm are wielded by the Miniſter with a ſkill and ability which double their force. Dexterous and bold, he ſeizes every advantage; and makes every event, in ſome mode, available to his purpoſe. Nothing is ſo minute as to eſcape the vigilance of his eye; nothing is ſo vaſt, ſo difficult, or perilous, as to intimidate the daring intrepidity of his mind. Artful and ſucceſsful in the greater operations of Coalition with powerful men, in the ſmaller appointments of office he is equally attentive and exact. In the diſtribution of honours, titles, ribbands, garters, though more profuſe than the moſt unſcrupulous of his predeceſſors, he ſucceeds in ſupporting the value of theſe baubles; and the coinage of this inexhauſtible mint, however copiouſly emitted, is ſtill coveted, ſtill undepreciated. How dangerous are his talents! How fatal is his Adminiſtration! How is he changed! How is he fallen! The friend of the young and uncorrupted Stateſman will ever regret the ruin of a character which once ſeemed likely

to rank with the brighteſt in Britiſh ſtory; and will pity the powerful mind, expoſed by too early ſucceſs, to be fixed by the faſcinating glare of POWER, and entangled irrecoverably in its ſerpent folds. But the Moraliſt and the Friend of Liberty muſt do more; he muſt add to his regret and pity, cenſure and condemnation. He muſt abandon the Miniſter, who has abandoned the virtuous principles of his youth; and reſiſt, with reſolution, the enemy of popular Rights, whoſe pernicious meaſures are now calculated to ruin that glorious cauſe which he before had ſworn to defend.

We have ſeen in the preceding pages by what giant ſteps Deſpotiſm has advanced upon us in the ſhort period of a century; we have ſeen the maſs of influence which has been accumulated ſince the Revolution, by our immoderate purſuit of conqueſt, territorial aggrandizement and the monopoly of commerce. And we have ventured to aſſert, that the weight thus raſhly thrown into the ſcale of Monarchy has given the Crown that degree of preponderance now, which was hardly attained by the proudeſt Plantagenet, in the early period of the Conſtitution. It would not be difficult to ſhow, that Miſeries, not perhaps exactly ſimilar in their form, but equal in extent and diſtreſs to thoſe produced in any equal portion of that period, have been in the laſt ſix years the conſequence of this preponder-

ance. We ſhall not, however, attempt to enumerate the myriads of lives loſt in battle, or worn out by hardſhip, fatigue, and privations of every comfort far from home. We ſhall not endeavour to ſketch a portrait of our domeſtic afflictions; or deſcribe the beggary in the lower orders of the People, the general impoveriſhment of the middle claſſes, and the diſtreſs of many, even of thoſe who rank among the affluent. The conſequence of theſe calamities, combined with the decline of perhaps the greateſt part of our manufactures, has been a melancholy depopulation, evidenced by the unexampled number of empty houſes in London, Manchester, Birmingham, and other lately flouriſhing Towns. But let it be ſuppoſed, that the meaſures now purſued by Miniſters for the extenſion of our Territory, and farther increaſe of Patronage, have hitherto produced no effects diſtreſſing or oppreſſive to the Nation: Muſt not diſtreſs and oppreſſion be the inevitable conſequence of a blind perſeverance in this ſyſtem? Muſt not the ruin of our Political Liberty be followed neceſſarily by the deſtruction of our Civil Rights, and the general Miſery of the Community? It cannot be doubted, that ſo it muſt be. All hiſtory, all experience atteſts this concluſion.

But inſtead of inſiſting farther on theſe conſiderations, we ſhall leave them to the Reader's

reflections. We have ſuggeſted them merely with a view to lead him on with us more readily to the inference we mean to draw: and though the ingenuity of our opponents may cavil, and endeavour to invalidate the accuracy of our general ſtatement in ſome inconſiderable particle, yet enough will remain clear and inconteſtible to warrant the inference; namely, that it behoves us to examine what is the ſtate of Parliament at preſent; and what counteracting power remains in that Aſſembly to reſiſt this mighty accumulation of influence, and protect with efficacy the Rights of the Nation.

And here we fear it will be found, that the balance which appeared to be wiſely and permanently ſettled at the Revolution, has been deranged, not only by the increaſe of weight in the Monarchal ſcale, but alſo by a diminution of weight in that ſcale of the Legiſlature, in which, by the principles of the Conſtitution, a juſt counterpoize ought to be fixed.

Of the Houſe of Lords, on this occaſion, it is unneceſſary, and it might be imprudent, that much ſhould be ſaid. But this may be obſerved, perhaps, without offence, that in theory the weight of that Houſe, though uſually moſt apt to be attracted by the Crown, is yet meant to ſhift; oſcillating from this ſcale to that; joining now the Monarch, now the Popular Aſſembly,

as the intereſt of the Public may appear to require for the ſeaſonable controul either of Royal Oppreſſion, or Democratic Licence. But for a conſiderable length of time, the fact has not been conformable with this theory. In every reign ſince the death of Anne, the Peers have been inſeparably united with the Crown. During this period, when the controuling Power of Parliament has been interpoſed, the interpoſition has not been the uncourtly act of the Peers. It is true, their weight has been, and it may again be thrown into the ſcale of Oppoſition. This is, indeed, poſſible; but a bare and meagre poſſibility cannot reſiſt the force of ſubſtantial facts, and the experience of an age. There is little probability of our being deceived by the concluſion, that the courtly complaiſance of our Hereditary Senate, for upwards of eighty years, will be continued by that Aſſembly, until it is freed by Reform from that undue influence by which its oſcillating Power is clogged and ſtopt. There are among the Peers, not a few of thoſe who ſtand foremoſt in rank and opulence, in wiſdom, experience, and parliamentary talents, who lament with us this fatal effect. We look up to thoſe truly noble Patriots with gratitude for their paſt ſervices to our Country, with reverent expectation of greater ſervices to come. When, with their aſſiſtance, and the conſent of the Crown, a juſt and temperate Reform ſhall

have been effected by the Commons', diſcontent on the one hand, and ſuſpicion on the other, it may be hoped, will be totally removed. The advantage of an enlightened Peerage balancing the ſcales of Power with a firm and impartial hand, between the Prince and the People, and ſupporting Liberty and Public Virtue againſt the extremes on either ſide, by which they might be deſtroyed, will be univerſally felt and acknowledged. And then, undoubtedly, the Conſtitution in all its branches will ſecure the affectionate attachment of every virtuous Citizen; and the veneration now peculiarly poſſeſſed by the Noble Lords alluded to, will be juſtly paid to that Aſſembly, of which their wiſe and patriotic conduct renders them at once the ornament and reproach.

In the mean time, it is more than probable, that, without the intervention of ſome extrinſic cauſe, the diſpoſition of the Houſe of Lords will remain more generally partial to the Crown, and adverſe to the popular wiſh, than at any former period of its inſtitution. And, as a Houſe of Parliament, whatever increaſe of importance it may have acquired from the Delegation of Scotch Peers added by the Union with Scotland, or the immenſe creation of Peers in the preſent Adminiſtration, that increaſed importance will all be centered in the Crown, and form with it one perfectly conſolidated maſs of Power.

Hopeleſs of aſſiſtance from the Upper Houſe of Parliament, let us turn to ſurvey the ſtate of that Houſe which more peculiarly belongs to the People. It is obſerved by a witty Author, ſpeaking of the Engliſh Gentry in modern times, that nothing could equal their anxiety to get into Parliament, but the anxiety of their forefathers to keep out. There is truth in this obſervation; and it is truth of ſerious importance. Before the reign of Charles the Firſt, the Engliſh Gentry often declined the tendered office of a Repreſentative. The duty to be performed was troubleſome; and the reward to be received was inadequate. About that time, the trifling wages paid by the Conſtituents gradually ceaſed to be taken; and the Court began occaſionally to adopt the policy of gaining the moſt diſtinguiſhed Members by Offices and Honours. This policy frequently proved ſucceſsful. It was more and more extenſively practiced, till, in the reign of William, the entry into Parliament was ſought as the firſt ſtep to honourable ambition, or coveted, as opening the road to lucrative advantage. Hence the new anxiety to obtain a command in Elections, by the purchaſe of houſes in the poorer Boroughs, with their contiguous lands and tithes; by accumulating navigation-ſhares, engroſſing coal-mines, and other means of affecting the trade and convenience of the inhabitants, and thus reducing them to a ſtate of

dependence. Even in one inſtance, the purchaſe of a ſpring of freſh water, materially convenient to the Burghers of a large town, has been eagerly ſought and completed, as no contemptible addition to power already great and predominant. With a ſimilar deſign an aſcendant in Corporations has been ſought. In ſome caſes, a majority of the Corporate Body has been procured to be choſen from among the relations and dependents of a powerful family. The majority once obtained, is eaſily increaſed, as vacancies in the Corporation occur. And thus the command of Parliamentary Elections is perpetually ſecured in the hands of the Patron.

Of theſe petty manœuvres the ſurvey has been ſufficient. But deſpicable as they are, their ſucceſs has not been inconſiderable: in the courſe of the laſt century it has produced a dangerous change in the Conſtitution of the Houſe of Commons.

We are aware, that, at the Revolution, ſeveral of the Boroughs were mean and inſignificant places, utterly unfit to retain the truſt of their Parliamentary franchiſe, from their abſolute incompetence to exerciſe it aright. Yet then, Parliament, though not ſo well compoſed as it had been in the early ages of the Conſtitution, was ſtill tolerably well connected with the Body of the Nation; and its conduct had been uſually

correſpondent with the ſenſe and intereſt of the Community. The defects in the Repreſentation, undoubtedly, were then perceived by the more ſagacious Friends of Liberty. But in the infant ſtate of Corruption, the practical miſchiefs reſulting from thoſe abuſes were not great, and no urgent neceſſity to correct them appeared to exiſt. It was wiſely reſolved, therefore, by the Conductors of the Revolution, to cloſe, as faſt as poſſible, the revolutionary ſcene. No ſpeculative improvements were propoſed; practical redreſs of the grievances under which they had actually ſuffered, was alone inſiſted on, and obtained. Hence the ſingular felicity of a Revolution in favour of Liberty, which, if not entirely bloodleſs, was yet effected with fewer ſtains of blood than perhaps any ſimilar event. By it, what was practically wrong was rectified; much immediate good was accompliſhed with little or no mixture of evil; and a precedent was held forth to poſterity, to be followed when a ſimilar neceſſity ſhould demand it.

But after that event, the ſtruggle with Corruption became more and more arduous from the rapidity of its growth; and yet, from the effect of the miſerable manœuvres alluded to, the ſtrength of its Antagoniſt was in a ſtate of continual decline. By thoſe means, the command of votes in a multitude of Boroughs has

been gradually engroſſed by one powerful Patron. In many other inſtances, an influence has been obtained by two or three families, by whoſe union the Right of Free Election has been equally annihilated. In England,* it is probable, that not leſs than fifty Boroughs have been thus enſlaved in the laſt age. Conſequently, not leſs than one hundred Members appointed by the nomination of one or two individuals have been added to that number, who, before the Revolution, held their ſeats by a ſimilar appointment. And it appears, from the unqueſtionable authority of the Petition preſented ſome years ago to Parliament by a moſt reſpectable Body of Men, † that 162 perſons do now appoint a deciſive majority of the Engliſh Repreſentation.

It is alſo to be lamented, that the Union with Scotland, which in other reſpects has been moſt beneficial to each of the United Nations, has, in this regard, produced a moſt pernicious effect. From an accurate enumeration of all the Voters

* In Yorkſhire this command has been obtained in the laſt age in the Boroughs of Malton, Richmond, Northallerton, Boroughbridge, and Knareſborough. Ripon has probably been enſlaved within the ſame period. But this is not aſſerted.——— One 17th part of the Repreſentation of England is ſhared by Yorkſhire.

† The Friends of the People, who offered proof to Parliament of the facts alledged in their Petition.

in Scotland,* their number in 1790 appeared not to exceed 4000. Of theſe, many are fictitious or fraudulent Voters, or the Members of a ſmall and ſelf-elected Corporation, by whom, in all the towns of Scotland, the Right of Election has been uſurped. In theſe places, not a ſingle Election has been left open to the People, and in the preſent criſis † the preponderance of the Oligarchy is thus increaſed in the Britiſh Houſe of Commons by the whole Repreſentation of Scotland. So crippled is the Conſtitution of Parliament, in this moſt important reſpect! So little community of Intereſt now ſubſiſts between the People and their aſſumed Repreſentatives!

With regard to the duration of Parliament, the change which was effected in the laſt age was not favourable to the Freedom of the People, or the purity of their Repreſentatives. Soon after the Revolution, a Triennial duration was eſtabliſhed, as the moſt convenient period. In the reign of George the Firſt, on frivolous pre-

* See a Report by the Friends of the People on the State of the Repreſentation of Scotland.

† It has been obſerved, that for ſome years every Repreſentative of the Towns, Cities, and Counties of Scotland, has habitually ſupported the meaſures of the Miniſter in Parliament. Yet many of the other Scotch Gentlemen are firm and enlightened Friends to Liberty.

texts, and in a moſt unwarrantable mode, it was lengthened to a Septennial duration. The change has evidently tended to facilitate the ſeduction of the Elective Senate, and detach it more completely from the intereſt of its Conſtituents.—The ſhameful Corruption, now become ſo generally prevalent at Elections, has alſo a ſimilar tendency. Thus has the fortreſs of our ſecurity been undermined in the laſt age by the ſubtle machinations of Fraud and Power! Thus has the ſanctuary of our Laws been thrown open, and profaned by the vileſt pollution!

In this degraded ſtate of the Conſtitution, weakened as it is by internal decay, and expoſed externally to the formidable influence of the Crown, the Senators who have Seceded performed their duty with zeal. By them the danger of the criſis was clearly ſeen. They felt, that every poſſible effort ought to be exerted, 1. to augment the counteracting power of Parliament by Reform: 2. to prevent the calamities of War, and thus ſtop the increaſe of undue Influence: 3. to ſupport the dignity of the Houſe of Commons: 4. to protect the perſonal freedom of the ſubject: 5. and to maintain the fundamental Law of the Land. Theſe were the objects of the Seceders moſt earneſt endeavours. And, in the courſe of their exertions for attaining theſe ends, they employed talents, and mani-

feſted reſolution, vigour, and perſeverance, which Parliament had never ſeen ſurpaſſed, but totally without ſucceſs.

To invigorate the powers of Parliament by a temperate Reform, was the firſt meaſure propoſed by this ſmall, but reſpectable band of Patriots. In 1792, notice was given of their intention to move this meaſure by a Member, of whom Northumberland may juſtly boaſt that he is the Savile of this age*. Immediately the Houſe was in confuſion, Corruption was alarmed, and the Miniſter dropt his maſque. From that moment, the Reformer-Miniſter adopted a new character and an oppoſite ſyſtem of Adminiſtration. A harſh Proclamation was ſpeedily iſſued. The ſage and virtuous friends of Reformation were branded as Seditious Enthuſiaſts or Revolutionary Traitors; the Nation was declared to be in danger, and a general panic was excited. After a conſiderable interval of time, and much deliberation, the plan for reſtoring the ancient purity and vigour of the Conſtitution was tendered to Parliament; it was a wiſe and comprehenſive plan; it was a plan of prudence and moderation; its principle was the ſame which the Miniſter had before adopted, and its probable effect more extenſively beneficial, and more prompt in the execution

* Charles Grey, Eſq.

Yet, though thus unexceptionable in all theſe reſpects, though introduced and ſupported by the utmoſt powers of reaſon and eloquence, the Miniſter did not bluſh to oppoſe the meaſure with vehemence, nor the Houſe heſitate to reject it with a deciſive negative.

Baffled in their attempt to purify and invigorate Parliament, was the band of Patriots more ſucceſsful in their endeavours to ſtop the progreſſive increaſe of the fund of Corruption, and prevent hoſtilities againſt the French Republic? No. When the Retainers of the Oligarchy declaimed with fury againſt the Democratic Government of France, the Miniſter, ſtrong in his new alliance with them, joined in their cry for War. The friends of Peace and Liberty urged whatever arguments humanity or policy could ſuggeſt to calm the paſſions of an enraged Senate, and avert the uplifted ſcourge. They deprecated that alternative of Deſpotiſm or Anarchy to which the proſecution of even a proſperous War would unavoidably expoſe us; they deprecated a War of punctilio, pride, or paſſion, and wiſely recommended an aſſiduous cultivation of the arts of Peace, and a ſteady attention to the improvement of our finances, till ſome great intereſt of our Country could only be preſerved by hoſtilities. But they urged, they deprecated, and they adviſed in vain.

Punctilio, pride, and paſſion prevailed againſt the plaineſt reaſon, and the wiſhes and intereſt of a few individuals outweighed in the Senate the wiſh and intereſt of the Community. To avenge the execution of the ill-fated Louis, to defend ſocial order, morality, and religion, to reſent the obnoxious but reſcinded decree of Nov. 19, 1792, to reſcue Holland, though not attacked, and even to cloſe the Navigation of the Scheldt, though not complained of, were among the moſt prominent pretexts for War. But their texture was too flimzy to hide the real motives, viz. the deſire to depreſs the ſpirit of Liberty in England; to ſecure the uſurped Power of the Oligarchy; and to aggrandize the Power of the Crown. The means for attaining theſe ends were to be found in War alone; and in a frenzy of rage it was commenced. Hence the peremptory rejection of every ſubſequent motion for reſtoring Peace, whether defeat or victory attended the Allied Armies. In either caſe, pretences were ſtill at hand to juſtify the Miniſter's refuſal to negotiate; and a willing Houſe admitted them, without much examination, and almoſt without deigning to liſten to his Opponents. When Belgium was recovered by the efforts of the Combined Army, and that of France was driven behind their own frontiers, Parliament was urged in vain to ſeize that favourable moment to treat, when every object

that could rationally be wiſhed from War, might be obtained by Peace. The propoſal, in the judgement of Miniſters, was moſt ridiculous: France now might be diſmembered; our army might march to Paris; the Republican Government might be over-turned; and the glorious opportunity to cripple France and reſtore her Monarchy was not to be loſt. Rouzed by theſe menaces, and this imminent danger, France ſaw that ſhe could be ſaved by Union alone. Diſmiſſing political animoſities, Frenchmen of all deſcriptions took up arms to ſupport the exiſting Government, and repel the invading foe. The efforts of that great armed Nation were irreſiſtible; they drove the combined troops beyond the frontiers, firſt of France, then of Belgium. Yet ſuch was the embarraſſment of the new Government of France, and ſo mighty did the force of the Confederacy ſtill appear, that even then a Peace, nearly reſtoring Europe to its original poſture, might probably have been obtained. Our Patriots wiſely propoſed and preſſed it, but they propoſed and preſſed it without ſucceſs. In the opinion of the Miniſter and the Houſe, the moment of defeat was not the time for negotiation. At length, peace, or a ceſſation of arms, became general throughout the Continent of Europe *.—The queſtion ſo often aſked with an air of triumph, Whom are we

* Portugal was an exception, but almoſt too inconſiderable to be noticed.

to treat with? was now become too ridiculous to be aſked again. Twice the Miniſter negotiated for Peace, and twice he failed to procure it. The firſt of theſe negotiations was merely a fine-ſpun web of diplomatic chicane and inſincerity; the ſecond has, in ſome degree, unravelled the ſecret of the Cabinet, and taught us for what we are doomed ſtill to contend. Perpetual War, or the Ceſſion of Ceylon and the Cape! Is this the alternative? Humanity ſickens at the ſound; and every friend of rational Liberty ſhudders at our approaching fate. But argument and admonition, reaſon and eloquence are loſt upon the Senate. In this fatal ſtruggle they plunge on, regardleſs of our exhauſted finances, and the certain ruin of the Conſtitution.

Defeated in their efforts to prevent or ſhorten the calamities of War, were theſe worthy Senators ſucceſsful in their endeavours to ſupport the dignity of the Houſe, and the Law of the Land? No. When they charged the Miniſter with a breach of his duty to that Houſe, as guardian of the purſe of the Nation, by having paid an immenſe ſubſidy to the Emperor without the conſent or knowledge of Parliament, even during a Seſſion, the charge was heard without emotion by the Houſe; the Miniſter avowed the fact, and his reſolution to act in a ſimilar manner again, when he might judge it proper. His contempt of the Right of

the Houſe was over-looked; and his avowal, inſtead of aggravating his fault, in the judgement of the Houſe, was accepted as his juſtification.

When they charged him with a breach of the Appropriation Law, he avowed the fact, and the Houſe acquieſced.

To ſtifle the cries of public miſery and diſcontent, more rigorous Laws were propoſed, affecting the perſonal Liberty of the ſubject, and even abridging the Right of Petition, which had been tranſmitted down to us from the earlieſt times, and aſſerted in the modern Charter of our Liberties. The venerable antiquity of our Right was diſregarded, the ſacredneſs of a compact, by which the Monarch's title to his Crown, and the People's right to their Freedom was thought to be equally ſecured, was infringed, and the BILL OF RIGHTS was rudely trampled on by the Son of Chatham. In vain the Friends of the People interpoſed with active and indefatigable zeal, and the cleareſt ſuperiority of argument to protect perſonal Freedom, and maintain the fundamental LAW OF THE LAND. By the influence of the Miniſter, the fatal Bills were paſſed, and perſonal Freedom was expoſed to new dangers from legal chicane; the violation of the BILL OF RIGHTS completed the

ruin of his character, and every virtuous breaſt throbbed with alarm for Conſtitutional Liberty.

Such were the principal circumſtances in the ſtate and conduct of Parliament and the Nation, which in our opinion formed that caſe of neceſſity in which an Appeal to the Public by Seceding from Parliament was juſtifiable, and even highly meritorious. And here the deciſion of this queſtion may be confidently left to our Readers on this ſtatement of the caſe. But foreſeeing ſome objections, pointed rather againſt the Seceders than their Seceſſion, which may occur to perſons of different political claſſes, we defer the concluſion of our paper for a few moments, to ſtate the objections, and offer to each a brief, and, we truſt, a ſatisfactory reply.

1. There are among the eager opponents of Miniſters, many who admit, that no uſeful impreſſion on the mind of Parliament was to be expected from any efforts of eloquence, however powerful. The audience, whoſe ears are ſtopt like the deaf adder, cannot be moved by the Orator's perſuaſion, charm he never ſo wiſely Yet why ſhould the Senator deſpair to rouze and animate the People, by the vigour of thoſe exertions in Parliament to which that Aſſembly might refuſe to attend? Why ſuffer the Public to remain ſo long ſupine and inactive, and leave

their zeal to be at laſt worked up to active oppoſition by the ſlow, though certain effect of Time? Becauſe, if the energy of eloquence ſhould ſtimulate their diſcontent, the pretext for freſh invaſions of Liberty would be afforded; and thus a Revolution would be effected, or would become unavoidable. Seceſſion ſhuns that danger with a caution ſuited to the times. It is a continued Proteſt againſt the meaſures of Miniſters, yet without popular ſtimulation. It is exactly that ſort of Appeal which warns the upper claſſes, without inflaming the lower. And when the illuſions of panic in the higher orders have been more completely removed by the patience of the inferior claſſes, under great and oppreſſive burthens, the Rich will ſee with horror that debaſing RUIN which their infatuation has ſuffered ſo nearly to approach. They will fly for ſafety to the remaining fences of the Conſtitution; and their confidence will then be repoſed, where it is juſtly due, in thoſe Seceded Stateſmen, whoſe counter-revolutionary meaſures they at preſent ſo groſsly miſunderſtand.

2. But here the Advocates of Miniſters, anxious to bring forward the diſcuſſion of an injurious perſonality, will, perhaps, admit that the Seceſſion may be, what it is here repreſented, a meaſure tending rather to prevent, than to promote a Revolution. "Let this be conceded for a moment, they will exclaim; and let us turn to the conſideration of another point of leſs difficult

determination, and too important to be overlooked. We aſſert, and the arguments of this paper appear to confirm the aſſertion, that the Seceders are no friends to the grandeur and glory of their country." Our reply is, that they are the trueſt friends to the grandeur and ultimate ſafety of Britain, not who endeavour to depreſs and extinguiſh, but who cheriſh and protect that ſpirit of Liberty, without which ſhe never could have attained her preſent pre-eminence: not they who purſue, by hoſtilities, the farther acquiſitionof diſtant ſettlements, madly defying National Bankruptcy and Confuſion, but they who warn their Countrymen to forbear that extenſion of their territory, which ſoon may, and ultimately muſt, prove the ruin of their Liberty; and to ſeek the ulterior wealth, proſperity, and ſplendour of the BRITISH EMPIRE in the peaceful extenſion of our Trade; in the improved cultivation of our Domain; in the diminution of our load of Debts and Taxes; in the milder and more equitable ſpirit of our Laws; and in thoſe meaſures of Conſtitutional Reform which would reſtore morals and public ſpirit to the PEOPLE, and its ancient virtue and vigour to the PARLIAMENT of Great-Britain. Such are the objects contended for by the Seceders; and on the fate of their endeavours, the Peace, the Grandeur, and the Happineſs of our Country depend.

Since the rupture of the Negotiation at Liſle, we have ſtruggled with the enemy through one bloody defenſive campaign; and we have ſtruggled with ſucceſs. The Rebellion fomented by France, in Ireland, has been ſuppreſſed; her troops landed in that unhappy Country have been captured; her armaments from Breſt and Dunkirk have been defeated or diſperſed; and her Toulon Fleet has been deſtroyed. Enough has been done to manifeſt the great defenſive Power of Britain, and her reſolution not for a moment to liſten to any ignominious condition of Peace, or ſuffer the dignity of her INDEPENDENCE to be in the ſmalleſt degree impaired. Nothing humiliating, nothing degrading can be endured in thought by this high-ſpirited and powerful Nation; and, leaſt of all, by that part of it who are the ſtrenuous Friends of Public Liberty. But farther acquiſitions of territory are neither eſſential to our honour, nor conducive to our ſafety. The dignity of our INDEPENDENCE may be nobly maintained without them. The objects contended for were the poſſeſſions of our late unfortunate Allies. Their total value is not equal to the expence of two months hoſtilities. But were it greater; to cede them to Holland would be an act of policy and true magnanimity. It would give Peace to Britain, and confirm the repoſe of Europe. It would be to act with that moderation which France falſely profeſſed; and to conciliate, by our

wiſer and more benevolent conduct, the eſteem of mankind. The opportunity is before us. We may with dignity and honour make the offer to negotiate again. We are ſecured by our victories from the fear of Invaſion; and no unworthy motive can now be imputed to us. The cruel policy of Miniſters would light the flames of War anew throughout Europe; and failing in that project, they would continue hoſtilities ſingly againſt France, in the mad ſtruggle for an uſeleſs and dangerous extenſion of our Empire *. That they will receive a check in this deſperate career, from the wiſdom of our Repreſentatives, is too much to be hoped. It is only from the wiſdom and virtue of the Collective Body, conſtitutionally exerted, that we can juſtly expect deliverance.

3. Repulſed in this attempt to injure our Seceded Stateſmen, the partizans of the Miniſter, doubtleſs, will renew their attack in a different direction. They will endeavour to repreſent them "As Men, who, in their eagerneſs for Peace, abandon the balance of Europe; who are

* To riſque the happineſs of the Empire for a Rock in Africa, and another Harbour in Aſia, may well be termed deſperate policy. The Cape of Good Hope cannot ſupport its Garriſon. It has been ſupplied with neceſſaries from Europe. Yet this barren, or ill-cultivated ſpot has a Governor with a ſalary, as it is ſaid, of 12,000l. a-year. Ceylon alſo has a Governor with a ſuitable ſalary, and a Civil and Military Liſt.—Trinidada too, and ſome other inſignificant Iſlands might here be mentioned.

willing to hazard nothing to emancipate Holland and Switzerland, or to wreſt Belgium and Weſtern Germany out of the hands of the French. They are no enemies to the aggrandizement of the Republic of France; their zeal for the welfare of their Country is queſtionable, and they are not entitled to the confidence of the Public." The emancipation of Switzerland, Weſtern Germany, and the Netherlands! Are theſe the objects for which we muſt engage in a new Continental War? Is this the ſcheme of wiſe and meaſured policy, which every good Citizen muſt approve and adopt? Are then the events of the late War upon the Continent ſo ſoon forgotten? Are the cautious maxims of the Court of Pruſſia ſo little underſtood? Can we ſuppoſe that wary Court willing to abandon France, her only ſtay and ſupport againſt the over-grown power of Ruſſia and Auſtria? Can our ſubſidies tempt that wiſe Cabinet to forego the certain advantage of ſharing in the ſecularizations of Germany without the riſque of hoſtilities, and to enter into the new Cruſade againſt her Ally? For what? That the Stadtholder and the Dutch and Helvetic Ariſtocracies may be re-eſtabliſhed, the Petty Princes of Weſtern Germany reſtored to their eſtates, and Italy furniſh to Auſtria a freſh addition to her immenſe Domain. Can changes ſo trifling or ſo dangerous to the intereſt of Pruſſia induce her Cabinet to alter their cautious policy? If this be inconceivable, what

conſequences but miſcarriage and ruin can reſult from the new-projected Coalition of Kings and Emperors, acting without Pruſſia againſt France? Perhaps againſt France aſſiſted by that Power? Under theſe circumſtances it is manifeſt that the renewal of hoſtilities upon the Continent would be attended with extreme danger to Auſtria. Hence it may be preſumed, that without the concurrence of Pruſſia, War will not be recommenced by the new Confederacy of Monarchs*; and the rage and animoſity of Britain will only

* Since this paſſage was written, it has been announced, that the troops of France have been attacked within the limits of the Roman Republic by the army of Naples; In conſequence of this aggreſſion, and the alleged diſcovery of intrigues carried on between the Courts of Naples and Turin, War has been declared againſt both thoſe Powers by the French Directory: the Neapolitan Army has been defeated by that of France; and the formal depoſition of the King of Sardinia has been effected. It is impoſſible not to feel compaſſion for this unhappy Monarch, ſtript of all his Continental Dominions, and fled for refuge to that Iſland, an Exile, rather than a King. But his misfortune ought not to be imputed to the recent cabals and projects of our Cabinet: He was in effect dethroned, when he admitted a French Garriſon into the Citadel of Turin. Whether the raſh and premature movement of the Monarch of Naples will tend to promote or prevent the renewal of a Continental War, whether theſe events will more intimidate or provoke the Emperor, a few weeks will probably ſhow. In the mean time, it behoves the Auſtrian Cabinet to conſider well the energy and enthuſiaſm manifeſted by the French Government; the ſkill and vigour diſplayed by their Armies and Generals on this occaſion; and, above all, the ready diſpoſition of the People and Army of Piedmont, to adopt a Democratic Government, and to unite with the French. Theſe are circumſtances which ſeem to confirm the reaſoning above.

ſerve to aggrandize Auſtria, by enabling her to inhance the terms of her pacification with France.

But the greateſt raſhneſs, the utmoſt injuſtice, are always poſſible to human folly. And War is not ſure to be avoided by the two great German Powers, merely becauſe Peace is the evident intereſt of one, perhaps of both. Pruſſia, tempted by the gold of Britain, may renounce her cautious policy, and, adopting the deſperate ſchemes of the Britiſh Cabinet, may enter once more with her old and dreaded Rival into the league againſt France. Such may be the reſult of the pending Negotiation * at Berlin. Yet, even in this caſe, we muſt not too haſtily anticipate our triumphs, or expect with confidence the diſmemberment of France. It will be more rational, perhaps, to judge the future by the paſt; and from the total defeat of the firſt Confederacy to augur a ſimilar miſcarriage of the ſecond.

Invaded by the German Powers, and the Combined Armies of Turkey, Ruſſia, Naples, and Britain, France will be ſupported by Spain, and the Democracies of Holland, Switzerland,

* The Hon. T. Grenville was the Negotiator ſent; but, unable to enter the frozen rivers and harbours of Germany, he has returned to England, after a fruitleſs and fatiguing voyage. The friends of humanity, and the well-wiſhers of England, ſeem to have little reaſon to lament the diſappointment.

and Italy. Again her mighty force will be excited by the approach of imminent danger; and her revolutionary enthuſiaſm will be again wound up to a pitch of fury, from which the Combined Monarchs will have every thing to fear. In number their forces may ſurpaſs, and in valour, diſcipline, and ſkill equal the Armies of France and her Allies. Their mutual fears and jealouſies may, for a time, be abſorbed in one common deſire to humble this proud Republic, and reduce her within the ancient frontier of France. For this purpoſe, on opening the campaign, their efforts may be directed with vigour and unanimity on one comprehenſive and well-concerted plan. On their firſt onſet, at every point of attack, ſucceſs may attend their armies. But ſoon, or a little later, this flow of proſperity will be ſtopt, and the tide of War will turn in favour of the Republic. New ſituations will open to the Allies new proſpects of perſonal advantage or danger; the general intereſt of the league will be poſtponed by each of the Allied Powers, to his own ſeparate and individual intereſt; new competitions will ariſe; old jealouſies and animoſities will be revived; the efforts of ſome of the Combined Monarchs will be relaxed; the exertions of others will be diverted by private views to the purſuit of objects little important to the General Cauſe. The preſſure upon France, by this great Confederacy, will be thus conſtantly weakened; while

her elaſtic power to reſiſt, and finally repel their compreſſing weight, will be continually increaſed by her ardour, and the zeal of her Democratic dependencies; defeat will call forth greater and more inceſſant exertions in the common cauſe of ſelf-preſervation; ſucceſs will add the incentives of glory, revenge, and conqueſt; and, mixing them with their paſſion for Liberty and National Defence, exalt once more the heroiſm of the Republican Armies to the higheſt pitch. The tactics and the cool mechanical valour of the Monarchal Troops will again be ſurpaſſed by the united ſkill and enthuſiaſm of their Republican Antagoniſts. Checked in the firſt campaign, or routed in the ſecond, the German and Italian Princes will be alarmed once more with the irruption of French Armies. The flood-gates will thus be thrown open afreſh to the revolutionary torrent. The oppreſſed Burghers and Peaſants of Germany and Italy will be hurried by it into violent commotions; the Petty Deſpots of * Suabia, Franconia, Weſtphalia, and Tuſcany will be ſwept off firſt to ruin; the greater Deſpot of Naples will follow them; and neither Berlin nor Vienna will be

* The order of events, here ſuppoſed, may probably be reverſed by the raſhneſs of the Neapolitan Monarch. His unexpected march to Rome has been ſucceeded by a more rapid march back to his own territories. Routed and purſued by the Republicans, he feels his Crown tottering on his head, and already turns his eyes to the Engliſh Fleet for a ſafe convoy to his Iſland of Sicily.—But the argument proceeds with unaltered force.

ſafe. Such, in all human probability, will be the unhappy conſequences of the firſt two campaigns of this new Continental War, ſo vehemently preſſed by the Britiſh Cabinet. The more fatal conſequences which ultimately may reſult from a farther proſecution of it, are too painful to be here ſurveyed. As Men friendly to the gradual and peaceful improvement of our ſpecies, we deprecate them from the bottom of our hearts, and willingly avert our eyes from the diſtreſſing proſpect.

But ſhould the moſt favourable events occur, which in this War can be ſuppoſed with any appearance of reaſon, what advantage can Britain expect? Let it be imagined, in contradiction to experience, that France will be unable to maintain her poſition, and defend her own frontiers, and thoſe of the new Democratic Republics. Preſſed by the Armies of Pruſſia and England on the ſide of the Netherlands, and by thoſe of Auſtria, Ruſſia, &c. on the Rhine and in Italy, ſhe muſt reſolve, either to abandon her recent acquiſitions in the Netherlands and Weſtern Germany, together with the Dutch and Swiſs Democracies, or give up the Italian Republics in whole, or in part. Reduced to this alternative, and it is the utmoſt which can rationally be hoped, which ſide of it will probably be the choice of the French Directory? Doubtleſs, the

preſervation of their frontier on the Rhine, and the maintenance of the Republics of Holland and Switzerland will be the primary object of their policy; and the defence of the Italian Republics will be deemed a conſideration of ſecondary and far inferior importance. At any ſuppoſable point of adverſity, the Directory will hold in their hands the means of deliverance. In any poſſible conjuncture, they will be able to detach the German Powers from the league by ceding Mantua, Milan, Bologna, Genoa, and even Rome to the Emperor's ambition, and agreeing that a ſuitable compenſation to his Brother Monarch of Pruſſia may be annexed to his Dominions in Lower Saxony and Weſtphalia. Under ſuch circumſtances it ſeems a romantic hope, that any efforts of Britain can ever reſtore the Oligarchies of Switzerland, and the Stadtholderate of Holland, or wreſt Belgium and Weſtern Germany out of the hands of France. It is poſſible, that ſhe may be forced to make ſome ſacrifices, and the two great German Powers may acquire the aggrandizement alluded to. But never muſt we look for thoſe ceſſions in the Dutch and Belgic Netherlands, which alone would form to Britain a conſiderable object of national advantage.

By the treaty of Campo Formio, the extenſion of her frontier to the Rhine was aſcer-

tained to France; and that extenſion has been admitted by the German Empire, as the principle of the ſubſequent Negotiation at Raſtadt. This formidable aggrandizement of our ancient Rival may juſtly be regretted; but when the German Powers themſelves have acceded to it, it were wiſe for Britain alſo to acquieſce. The difficulties which have retarded the Definitive Peace at Raſtadt, have related ſolely, or chiefly to the propoſed ſecularizations. Reſpecting theſe changes, the intereſts of the Empire may ſafely be truſted with the Princes of Germany, who are now ſettling with France the neceſſary compenſations. However mortifying her interference may be to the Britiſh Cabinet, it cannot be a valid reaſon for a new Continental War *.

The renewal of a General War upon the Continent, on this ground, cannot be too deeply deprecated. It would be an act of more dire temerity than its commencement before; and the worſt of evils, in every direction, may be its fatal conſequence.

* This has been avowed by Lord Grenville as one reaſon for another Continental War. In the debate in the Houſe of Lords on the King's Speech at the opening of this Seſſion, ſee the reply of Lord Grenville to a wiſe and humane Speech by the Marquis of Lanſdowne in favour of Peace. Unfortunately, however, the Nation ſeems as little to underſtand the wiſdom of Lord Lanſdowne's pacific policy, as it appears to feel the generoſity of Mr. Fox's conduct, in ſupporting the principles of Conſtitutional Liberty.

The futility of the Miniſter's warlike projects, and the emptineſs of his pompous phraſes, have been already detected. Let not the propoſal of a new War for the DELIVERANCE OF EUROPE delude the good ſenſe of the Engliſh Nation. Without our inauſpicious interference, Europe will be ſafe; and without our fooliſh obſtinacy to retain the conquered ſettlements of Spain and Holland, the hazards of internal Revolution will be removed by a General Peace, and Britain, neither endangered nor diſhonoured, will again enjoy the bleſſings of repoſe, and a mild Government ſecured by a timely, juſt, and temperate Reformation of Parliament.

Upon the whole, then, we aſk, who have proved themſelves the moſt judicious Adverſaries of French aggrandizement? They who foreſaw and predicted, that the Confederacy of Kings againſt the Republic of France would prove an abortive enterprize; who with a wiſe caution adviſed Miniſters to ſhun or ſhorten a conflict that might lead to ruin; who warned them that it would be perilous in the extreme to grapple with France, when the fervor of revolutionary enthuſiaſm gave her in ſome ſort a præternatural power, which might produce incalculable effects; and that from the deſperate frenzy into which they were preparing to goad her, conqueſt and crime might equally reſult; but were her ardour ſuffered

to cool by Peace, inſtead of planning conqueſts abroad, the utmoſt exertions of her ſkill would be employed for a ſeries of years in repairing her internal damage from the ſtorm of the Revolution, and ſettling on a ſecure foundation the diſordered intereſts of the Republic; or they who, rejecting theſe ſage admonitions, raſhly plunged into the War, predicting it would be a ſhort one, and its iſſue fortunate for this Country. Who beſt deſerve the confidence of the Public? They who by their ill-planned and ill-conducted hoſtilities upon the Continent have actually aggrandized the French Republic; and yet, with a ſtrange obſtinacy would attempt to retrieve what their impolicy has thrown into the graſp of France, by repeating an experiment already found ſo unfortunate; or they who have always adviſed pacific meaſures, and now, more than ever, recommend them; whoſe plan for ſupporting the grandeur of Britain is deep and comprehenſive; not formed on ſuperficial views, or for the narrow purpoſes of ſelfiſh ambition; but calculated on the ſure grounds of experience to ſecure the laſting proſperity of the Empire; whoſe wiſdom would immediately terminate this diſaſtrous War, if Peace on ſafe and equitable terms were found to be attainable; but if ſuch terms, on a freſh overture, could not be attained, whoſe liberal policy, by reſtoring the true principles of the Conſtitution, and introducing an Admini-

ſtration at once firm and popular, vigorous and œconomical, would enable this free, and by them, United Nation, NOW, and in the AGES TO COME, to maintain her INDEPENDENCE with a lofty hand, and ſucceſsfully to reſiſt the Power of France, however formidably augmented by the raſhneſs and obſtinacy of the preſent Adminiſtration.

4. But aſhamed of their miſrepreſentations, our Opponents reſort to a new cavil. Why, they aſk, do Senators Secede, or private Men complain that Liberty is in danger, when the Miniſter, by conſenting to the re-eſtabliſhment of Juries in their ancient Right, has given an ample additional ſecurity to the People, and proved that his Adminiſtration is not unfriendly to Liberty? To this we anſwer, that if Parliament be once loſt to the Public by its ſervile ſubjection to the Cabinet, no Civil Right will be ſafe for a ſingle Seſſion; every protecting privilege may be voted away with as much facility as the Habeas Corpus Law has been ſuſpended. What the Miniſter has conferred, the Miniſter, at his pleaſure, may reſume. Privileges, precariouſly held by Juries, cannot leſſen the neceſſity to Secede: They may increaſe the efficacy of popular interference; they cannot render Seceſſion, with a view to obtain it, improper or unſeaſonable. In a criſis of great danger, and in a ſtate of Parliament which is utterly hopeleſs without the lawful interpoſition of the People, Seceſſion

then, and not till then, becomes an act of duty to the Public.

But here we readily acknowledge the importance of the regulation alluded to. With the reſt of the Miniſter's ſyſtem it appears incompatible. But it is not our buſineſs to explain his inconſiſtencies; neither is it our wiſh to depreciate what he has done well. We willingly commend this conceſſion; and we admit, that, from a long ſeries of acts which indiſputably evince his guilt, one beneficial meaſure, in which he concurred, may be ſelected. For while the Miniſter's ſhare of praiſe for this meaſure is allowed him, it muſt not be forgotten that the reſtoration of the Right of Juries is principally to be aſcribed to two Senators, the foremoſt of his Opponents. The firſt a Man * born to unite accompliſhments and virtues ſeemingly oppoſite; who joins to the ſofteſt philanthropy, the firmneſs and vigour of a philoſophic mind; and, to the wiſdom of an experienced Stateſman, adds the eloquence of a Demoſthenes, and the zeal of a Patriot in the cauſe of Liberty; and linked in friendſhip with him, that intrepid Man †, who firſt combated the prejudices of the Bar and

* The Honourable C. J. Fox.

† The Honourable T. Erſkine.

the Bench, before he attempted to conquer thoſe of the Senate; whoſe paſſion for Liberty is the natural glow of a mind at once ardent and benevolent; whoſe eloquence and learning fit him to plead the Cauſe of his Country; who treads with firm and rapid ſteps that honourable courſe which Somers trod before him.

5. The laſt objection which we ſhall beg leave to ſtate relates to ourſelves. It may be ſaid, that we ſtand ſelf-contradicted, and our invidious allegation of the peril and tyranny of the times is confuted by the freedom we have not feared to uſe in this diſcuſſion. To this obſervation our anſwer ſhall be brief. What we have written has been the reſult of our conviction, that the Country is in danger; and that ſafety can only be found in thoſe meaſures to which the Seceſſion we have thus freely vindicated is a continual exhortation. In ſtating our ſentiments to the Public, with all the force of argument which our feeble powers would permit, we have but complied with the dictates of duty. We truſt that we have fallen into no indecency of expreſſion; we are well aſſured, that we have not exceeded the bounds of legality. That there may be danger in this conduct, we are aware. We affect not to magnify, but we are prepared to meet it. We have not forgotten that the

Cabinet poſſeſs the unlimited Power of IMPRISONMENT. Aged as we are, and bowed with infirmities, we are ill able to ſuſtain the preſſure of thoſe hardſhips, which a rigorous exerciſe of that Power might poſſibly inflict. Perhaps the Cabinet are too candid, or too politic, thus to oppreſs innocent Men. Whether Mr. Pitt be capable of acting with ſo much rancour and malignity, we know not. We hope that he is not. But ſtill the abuſe of unlimited Power is poſſible. The Cabinet of Charles the Firſt oppreſſed the virtuous Elliot, whoſe only fault was the honeſt performance of his duty. Guilty of no breach of Law, he periſhed by the worſt of deaths, the ſlow torture of a diſſolution, effected by the hardſhips of a priſon. But the fear of poſſible oppreſſion will not juſtify the non-performance of our duty to the Public. We truſt to the PROTECTION OF THE LAW. But if Law ſhould be unable to protect, if the fate of the generous Elliot ſhould await us, may we meet it with his unſhaken fortitude! May the ſmile of APPROVING HEAVEN conſole and cheer us to the laſt!

THE END.